

FORUM

Internal Party Journal of the S.P.G.B.

No. 6

MARCH 1953

SIXPENCE

WHICH WORKERS SHALL THE PARTY SUPPORT?

The Wrong Approach of Selectivity

During a recent forum at Head Office on "Is our approach to propaganda outdated?" several members argued that we should be more selective in our propaganda. They stated that, just as in our ordinary social acquaintanceships we recognise that some people are preferable to others, so it should be with our propaganda.

Some argued that outdoor propaganda was almost useless, on the grounds that to direct our propaganda to everybody was, in fact, to interest nobody.

It was stated by one member that advertisers recognised the need for selectivity. For example, patent medicine firms couched their advertisements in language and pictures that would appeal to the older generation, because they would be more likely to have the complaints that the advertised products claimed to cure. It was suggested that we should learn from this and direct our propaganda to people who are more likely to be interested in our case. One thing I noticed was the vagueness as to who were the people most likely to be interested.

Are these people to be recognised politically—are they Labour or Communist Party supporters? Perhaps we could recognise them occupationally; are dockers, for example, more likely adherents to the S.P.G.B. than, say, clerical workers? Or perhaps Trade Unionists are better material than non-Trade Unionists?

To put it another way: can we say that Roman Catholics, Jews, capitalists, managers, small-shop keepers, prostitutes, farmers, professionals, women, homosexuals, people of so-called backward countries, fascists, are groupings which will be least likely to be attracted to our case?

During my speaking experience for the Party, I have heard all these and other groups described as "the least likely", "the most backward", "outside the pale", "wrong type", "not worth arguing with", I must add that I have in the past been as guilty of this as anyone.

Were I to add up all the groups that have been so described, it would leave us only with ourselves—no, not even us, because every Party member has belonged to one or more of these groupings. I think that we can dismiss this "selective argument" as mere prejudice.

Will Capitalists Benefit?

Of course, there is one form of selection which the Party has always employed; namely, that our propaganda has to be directed to the "working-class alone", that capitalists have little or nothing to gain from socialism and consequently will always oppose it.

It is my contention that all this talk of selectivity, including the selection of the 'working-class alone' as the saviours of humanity, springs from the fact that the nature of socialism has been forgotten, disregarded, or not known.

There are no groups of people, past or present, who, living under a property regime, have not been antagonistic to each other. Socialism is a way of living; living harmoniously with all people. It is untrue that there are people who have little or nothing to gain by the establishment of socialism.

If our propaganda is based upon an appeal to the "working-class alone" and openly or implicitly excludes all others, then the picture we create in the minds of our listeners or readers, and in OUR OWN, is not that of socialism but of a universal, idealized capitalism. It conjures up the picture that all people will live as the rich people live. What else can be drawn from the statement that "the capitalists have nothing to gain but all to lose by the establishment of socialism"? To any reasonable person it must mean that, if capitalists have nothing to gain, they must already have what the workers will gain.

It is this kind of argument that leads some to think that mass-production must continue, for if we are all to possess what rich people have to-day, then obviously we will need vast plant and machinery along with excessive subdivision of labour in order to turn out the palaces, cars, luxury liners and gadgets that clutter up the lives of people to-day.

Of course, there are those who state that it is true that all people will benefit by the establishment of socialism but that we will never be able to convince the capitalists of this.

If it is true that all will gain, then it is possible to explain this to all, including the wealthy.

Exclude None

What then is there that makes it impossible for capitalists or any other group to under-

stand and accept socialism? The only answer I can see is that the capitalists' position is not solely due to particular conditions, but is such that they have been affected biologically; capitalists are somehow prevented from grasping and accepting ideas that others can. This would also be true of all the groupings, such as fascists, women, and the people in "backward countries" whom, it is said, we will never get to understand and accept socialist ideas.

Another damaging aspect of this point of view is that if we take the attitude that there are groups that cannot understand and accept our ideas then our propaganda must be framed to exclude them. This they *will* understand—that we have excluded and rejected them, which must produce hostility.

The customary title of debate indicates what I mean "Which Party Should the WORKING-CLASS Support, Socialist or Conservative?"

The implication contained in the title is that, if workers support the Tories they are misguided, but for the capitalist it is correct that they should support the conservatives and the title is so framed to exclude rich people from thinking that they should support socialism.

It is this approach in our propaganda which prevents people from discarding violence as a means to the establishment of socialism.

SELECTIVITY



"Comrades and—er—front row from your right, 2nd, 4th, 5th..."

Further, once we commence excluding this or that group, we will attract people who will have their own particular prejudices and the Party will find that some members will rule out capitalists, others all non-trade unionists, yet others all clerical workers. The logic of this will be that soon the formula for debates will be changed to "Which workers should the

Party support?"

The answer to all this, as I see it, is that our propaganda should convey our ideas of socialism to ALL people; presenting our case to them as HUMAN BEINGS. It is true that they will oppose our point of view from whichever prejudice or group of prejudices they hold, and we can only answer them to the

extent that *we have rid ourselves* of prejudices.

This we must do if we are true to our socialist outlook—

**A WORLD OF HUMAN BEINGS,
WORKING FREELY AND IN HAR-
MONY WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE
MUTUAL BENEFIT OF ALL.**

A. TURNER.

From America

CANTER CONFUTED

"A socialist party must be supple. Never swaying from its main objectives, it must nevertheless be prepared to alter its attitudes with each new change of material conditions. This is our approach, and on this ground we take our stand."

The above is the concluding paragraph of Canter's reply to the Open Letter written by a group of Boston comrades dealing with "The Ballot and Socialism". As Canter's concluding thought, it conveys, more than all the preceding arguments, just what Canter is really driving at. To wit: a party supple enough to attract to its ranks others who are supple-minded.

The Socialist movement, however, does not find its basis in suppleness or the supple-minded, but rather in the rigidity of principles drawn from unsupple but established facts. On the other hand, the various organizations, now and in the past, that have made up the so-called working-class movement, have all shown great elasticity and supple-mindedness, with the result that their checkered history has not outrun their checkered thinking. To be sure, a socialist and his organization must be prepared to alter their attitudes with each change of material conditions—and this socialists do and have always done. By far more than inference, Canter accuses the socialists who sponsored the Open Letter of not doing this, i.e., changing with the changes of new material conditions. He states:

"... But the Open Letter position does not permit the growth of a movement of any sort, because it immediately excludes socialists. This is the importance of this ballot issue, that it stands in the way—as similar dogmatic positions have stood in the way on other occasions—of the uniting of the socialists into one organization." (Light type mine.)

Bone of Contention

Since when have socialists been interested in the growth of a "movement of any sort"? They are only interested in an organization composed of socialists. By which means individuals united by socialist principles and the common goal of socialism. If anything has "stood in the way" of others joining the ranks of organized socialism, it has not taken long for us to discover what the obstacle was. It was always some principle that became the bone of contention.

The question to which Canter, himself, devotes so much time and space is such a

principle and also the bone of contention. It is a basic principle of socialism; stated and restated from the "Communist Manifesto of 1848" down to the most recent writings in the socialist press. If this principle has "stood in the way" of workers joining the ranks of socialism, so much stronger has been the socialist movement. In any case, an examination of such individuals has generally proven that this is not their only disagreement with the principles of socialism. Canter, of course, knows this too well. For he opens his reply with:

"The Open Letter issued by a group of Boston comrades has succeeded in doing one thing: it has elevated to a principle question whether or not socialism will come about through the ballot. The Open Letter categorically states that socialism will come about in one way only, through the ballot. If this position is adopted, then the line of demarcation between socialists and non-socialists will be the belief or non-belief in the ultimate efficacy of the ballot, and those who believe it may result from some other action by the conscious majority are repudiators of majority action, advocates of violence—in short, hold principles a socialist should not hold..."

To which we can add that the above is not "the" line of demarcation, but "a" line of demarcation. Just as important, however, in sorting out the ewes from the lambs. Immediately following the above, Canter throws in the following, for extra weight.

"... Another reason for the untenability of the Open Letter position is that it violates the materialistic approach to history. Before even the material conditions—those of a conscious majority—are at hand the Open Letter advocates knew them in advance."

If the existence of "a conscious majority" was the only "material condition" necessary for the socialist revolution, then Canter would be correct in his accusation. However, such is not the case. Decidedly important, as a material condition, is the *modus operandi* by which the socialist consciousness can be applied to other material conditions of capitalist society and turned into the reality of a socialist society.

Violation of the M.C. of H.?

It has long been our contention that in the advanced capitalist countries all of the material conditions, excepting the one of working class socialist consciousness, exist. It has also been our claim, and still is, that the method by which they can emancipate themselves (whenever they so desire) exists also, and has developed within

the womb of the society which will produce the new society. By this we mean the ballot. How the recognition of an established fact, its usage in the future, is a violation of the Materialist Conception of History, we do not understand. The same method of deductive science is being used every day in different spheres of science without making the scientists unscientific. If anyone violates the Materialist Conception of History, it would be, to quote Canter, "... those who are of the opinion that history may dictate other methods to the conscious majority..."

History does not include 'ifs' and 'maybe'. It is composed of the facts of what was and what is. Conjecture does not make for history. Deduction from facts does. Even Canter departs from conjecture in the following:

"... We recognise the necessity of majority action, that the political state must be overcome, that the change must be a revolutionary one without any transition periods. Beyond this at this particular stage we cannot go..."

He is speaking of the future just as much as the writers of the Open Letter. Just what is it that makes him so certain about what the workers must do in the future, which he claims makes others unscientific and violators of the Materialist Conception of History? It is precisely this point, the overcoming of the political state that puts the writers of the Open Letter on solid ground. It is their claim, based upon the reality of fact, that the necessary machinery for overcoming the political state is at hand, i.e., the Ballot. Canter, for all his claims, agrees with this, for he himself states: "What else is there to advocate *to-day* but the ballot?" (Italics mine).

But, having asked the question, Canter is dissatisfied with the answer given by the writers of the Open Letter, and proceeds to show the difficulties that confront the working class in the U.S.A. Not one of these or all of them could prevent a socialist-minded working class from reaching its goal. What has been produced by legal enactment can be abolished by legal enactment, the time element notwithstanding. In any case, Canter provides his own reply when he says:

"When the conscious majority comes about does one think for a moment that it will permit itself to be thwarted by such measures as required by the constitution?"

S.F. & G.G.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

Agreement on the Future

BEFORE tackling the main subject, I must briefly answer two direct questions in Comrade Turner's article opposing mass production. Readers will be able to assess the merits of the other points without further debate here.

First, he questions whether a single, standardised process can relieve arduous toil. Remember, all I maintain is that *some* mass production is preferable to achieving a similar result by other methods. For example, except for special purposes, I cannot imagine society abandoning the use of screw-making machines—i.e., mass-producing screws—and laboriously making each one separately. My case is that socialist society is not going to stop using such machines (assuming the end-product is still required) just because *some* people might prefer to make things like screws individually rather than use the hated standardised machine processes.

Turner wants to hear from members about the "differences" which will make mass-production methods attractive within socialism. The answer is they won't be particularly attractive—or repulsive for that matter. They may simply be preferable to the alternatives. I agree there is no question of socialism giving us repetitive jobs that require the use of only a small part of our nervous system and brain capacity. Machines will be used as a substitute for slave labour, performing monotonous tasks and leaving people free to do essentially human work.

Abolishing the Cities

The masters of scientific socialism advocated the abolition of town and country, asserts Comrade Turner. But the actual quotations from *Capital* and *Landmarks* only include the phrase "the separation between town and country". To abolish the separation is not necessarily to abolish every distinction between the two. When we say that socialism will abolish the separation between men and women in the sphere of work, we do not mean that men and women will be abolished.

In order to get Engels' quotation in perspective, one should read the preceding paragraphs. The large cities which "will take much time and trouble to abolish" are the factory towns. Engels doesn't refer to socialism, but writes of "the proportionate distribution of the greater industry throughout the country". Earlier, in a letter to Lange, he had written:

"We start from the premise that the same forces which have created modern bourgeois society will also suffice to raise the productive power of each individual, so much that he can produce enough for the consumption of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 individuals. Then town industry, as it is to-day, will be able to spare people enough to give agriculture quite other forces than it has had up to now: science will then at last be applied in agriculture on a large scale and with the same consistency as in industry."

—Selected Correspondence, p. 129.

And this process has, in fact, already begun. The town *has* spread into the country—satellite towns are being developed and farms mechanised. True, the increase in productivity is to some extent offset by the more "round-about" mass-production methods. On the other hand, the growth of universality, being brought about by the world-wide nature of capitalism, means that the gap between the city slicker and the country yokel is narrowing, despite the excessive localisation of production for a market. With socialism, it may still be convenient to localise certain production (e.g., of minerals), and to gather together populations in towns—but nothing like the kind Engels wanted to abolish.

Towns of the Future

Whether or not William Morris and Belfort Bax are numbered among the 'masters' of scientific socialism, their ideas of the future are more reasonable than many, and do, I think, provide a sound basis for discussion:

"As to the manufacturing towns . . . they would be superfluous, while on the other hand there would be no great centres of government or finance to attract huge populations or to keep them together. In the future, therefore, towns and cities will be built and inhabited simply as convenient and pleasurable systems of dwelling-houses, which would include, of course, all desirable public buildings."—*"Socialism—Its Growth and Outcome"*, p. 314.

But whatever our particular concept of the towns or communities of the future, we must always keep in mind the significance that such speculation has for our propaganda. For, regardless of our personal preferences, the way in which we answer the question "what will socialism be like?" will largely determine whether our audiences are made to feel with us, apart from us, or even against us.

Significance for Propaganda

Our main object is to get the people we address to agree that the things we propose are practicable and desirable. We all have different ideas about what the future society will look like, which we can discuss endlessly and to which we can convert each other. But remember that all this is sterile unless something emerges that will convince others, that will help them to understand the principles upon which socialist society must be built.

We are accustomed to saying that we know the past, and indeed much undoubtedly accurate information about it is available. But the picture we piece together is not of what really took place—it is *our* picture of the past,

coloured by our present experiences. Much more so is the future, of which we have no concrete data, necessarily *our* picture of the future.

The use of the scientific method demands that we ascend from the particular to the general. But with the future this is not possible—there is no 'particular' to ascend from. We are accordingly obliged to describe the future by agreeing upon generalities; seeing, as through a fog, the vague outlines of the new society, which become clearer as our audiences approach it in ideas and we all approach it in time.

What do most people want from life? Take away all the products of capitalist influence (difficult though this may be) and you have a residue of human hopes, desires and fears that is remarkably universal. Each of us, in becoming a socialist, integrates these feelings with the formal socialist case—though sometimes this process is painfully slow. Perhaps our propaganda has not been as helpful as it could be. There is so much common ground that we and our audiences share, so many ways to express and appreciate our similarities, that it seems a pity to accentuate the trifling differences.

Points of Agreement?

Any summary of the ground covered in dealing with the whole question of future production must be inadequate, since its ramifications are so all-embracing. The articles on mass-production may be taken in conjunction with the extracts from "The New Vision" (Jan. *Forum*) and with the article on Wealth Production in this issue. From these I tentatively suggest that the following points will be acceptable to members:

1. There will be no belt-systems under Socialism. Machines will be used to perform tedious and irksome tasks, but not at the expense of making people into appendages of machines.
2. The division of labour will be such as to encourage the maximum all-round development of human potentialities. (*How* this will be achieved is a more contentious matter.)
3. The separation between town and country will be abolished—there will be no vast cities like London to-day. Production will be to satisfy the requirements of individuals and society in a mutually complementary way.
4. There will no longer be a separation between work and leisure. Work will become the expression of living.

There is vast scope here for making contact with people. Let our speakers and writers go at it—and put some flesh and blood on that skeleton of production for use.

S.R.P.

Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W.4. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to:-

E. Lake, S.P.G.B.

THE BURDEN OF HEAD OFFICE

THE Party is going through a bad period. Ostensibly, through lack of money, it is deferring tasks and cutting down on propaganda activities that are crying out to be undertaken. There is the new edition of *Questions of the Day* to be published, other pamphlets have been written; provincial propaganda, the hiring of halls, publicity and election campaigns are all held up, awaiting funds. When somebody asks (as more and more are doing) why one of these activities can't be launched or expanded, the inevitable answer is, "we can't afford it".

But let's take a look at what we can afford. We are the proud owners of nine rooms at Clapham. The Party, whose only justification for existence is the spreading of socialist propaganda, kids itself that these shackles on its limbs are both necessary and desirable.

Do you remember a circular sent out by the New Premises Fund Organisers just before we bought 52 Clapham High Street? It said: "In more suitable rooms, the large amount of work needed to be done in our organization can be done more quickly and more efficiently." And just after we moved in, the Premises Committee joyously wrote (S.S., Nov. 1951), "In the past, the S.P.G.B. has been handicapped in its organization by unsuitable premises . . . We were fortunate to find more suitable premises . . . The premises,

we believe, will serve a long-felt want as a centre of social life for members and friends." Such was the enthusiasm for No. 52 that not even seven months of living with her could damp the ardour of her supporters, though her extravagant tastes were becoming obvious.

More recently, a writer in *Forum* (Dec.) thought that "the overwhelming majority of the membership like and want the sort of facilities offered by the present (or similar) premises." Yes, to some it still feels good to be married to old Jezebel; but now the honeymoon period is over, let us make a few comparisons with our irresponsible bachelor days at Rugby Chambers.

Crowning Irony

First, it is said that Party work can now be done more quickly and efficiently. More quickly?—presumably because there is room for more helpers. But there aren't more helpers! The fact is, more members used to crowd into the 1,200 sq. ft. of Rugby Chambers on a Tuesday than do into the 3,000 sq. ft. of No. 52. More efficiently? Maybe the sub-committees find it easier to work in? On the whole, the reverse is true—and the crowning irony is the Premises Committee's admission that their work was made difficult because some of them live on the other side of London!

Then, Rugby Chambers was "unsuitable". You couldn't hold public meeting there. Nor can you at No. 52—where it's not the landlord

that stops you but the public. But, at least, we acknowledged the fact at Rugby Chambers, and held good indoor meetings at the T.U. Club, Leicester Square. Now what happens in that big room at H.O.? There are the E.C. meetings, a class or two and a forum—hardly ever is the audience bigger than the old E.C. room at Rugby Chambers could have held.

A centre of social life? A.P. summed it up as a club in Clapham. However welcome the socialist cup of tea and game of darts, such considerations should not be ranked as activities of the Party for which premises are required.

There Are Other Premises

The chief defence of No. 52 is that "it was the lesser of two evils". But it can hardly be maintained that there was no other property to be found. If we could buy a place for £4,000 and £10 a week running expenses (yes, that's what it costs) then smaller premises would have cost proportionately less. And, in fact, while No. 52 was being bought, I submitted details of seven rooms in good repair at Chalk Farm for £3,000 and about £6 a week—but unfortunately they were sold in the interim.

In the last year or so, more property has come on to the market, and it is cheaper. Though it might be hard to sell No. 52, we could assuredly buy a smaller place that would be perhaps £4 a week cheaper to run. Or it is now quite possible that we could rent some rooms at less than £10 a week, thus freeing our whole purchase price.

What sort of place should we look for? I suggest it should be reasonably central (which Clapham is *not*); about half the floor space of No. 52, i.e. a bit bigger than Rugby Chambers; and in good repair. The only work for the Party in which a socialist builder or decorator can take a pride is helping to propagate socialist ideas.

As I see it, we need lose none of the facilities at No. 52, except possibly the canteen and the rare full-to-capacity meetings in the hall. True, we should probably be overcrowded on a Tuesday evening. However, we could survive that. And there wouldn't be a spare room for whoever fancies he needs one—but this is a luxury the Party can well do without.

Party Finances

Many members hold the mistaken view that we can increase Party income by the amount that we increase prices of literature, dues stamps, etc. They fail to see the problem of finance as a whole. Thus the raising of H.O. dues from 2d. to 4d. means *on paper* increasing receipts from £450 to £900 p.a. In fact, however, dues receipts at 2d. have been just over £300—and the Party will be very lucky to get an extra £300. But this will affect donations, so the net gain may be less than £200. It is not that members have a fixed amount to give the Party, but that paying Peter often robs Paul.

To make the S.S. 6d., for example, would

SLUM CLEARANCE IN CLAPHAM

At the meeting of the E.C. on Tuesday, January 6th, when the appointment of committees was under discussion, it was decided to defer the appointment of a Premises Committee, due to lack of nominations.

The condition of Head Office premises depends, almost entirely, on the work of the Premises Committee. The Party cannot afford to employ builders to carry out decorations and running repairs. It is as much as we can do to provide money for the materials. This committee must therefore consist of a small team of tradesmen who can between them undertake decorating, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, and so on.

There is a lot of work still to be done. The previous committee has been quite unable to keep abreast of the work because of lack of assistance, because their own time is limited, and because some of its members live on the other side of London. Appeals made to Branches have produced no replies—only the complaints come in.

The result can be seen by anyone who visits 52 Clapham High Street: shabby offices which are a disgrace to the Party.

We need a committee of half a dozen members who can undertake to work regularly as a team until the back of the job is broken.

Here is a useful job to be done for the Party—a job in which any member can take a pride. If any member who reads this feels that he can contribute work in any of the trades mentioned above, we appeal to him to let us know.

Don't leave it to the other chap to come forward—he won't!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

WHAT IS MASS PRODUCTION?

FIVE main techniques, or methods, of production have been used in Britain in the last 500 years. They are as follows:

1. Handicraft

This is the simplest method of wealth production, in which a man works on materials with a tool, and produces whole articles, such as tables and chairs. Finger skill is essential in this method, and proficiency is termed craftsmanship. William Morris is the best known student and advocate of this method in recent years.

2. Manufacture

In this method, a number of workers are concentrated in a single workshop, and though each works on material with a tool, he does only a limited number of operations; he specialises and becomes a cog in a manufacturing process, for the manufacturing method consists essentially of a process of which all the working parts are human being. This is the type of mass production described and criticised by Adam Smith and his teacher, Ferguson.

3. Power-driven Machinery

This is the method of the Mechanical Era which started with the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. Here man is a machine-minder, looking after a machine which consists of a power unit, a transmission mechanism and a working tool. The physical exertions of the man are replaced by a power unit, while the transmission mechanism controls the tool in place of his fingers. There has been some controversy in the past as to whether the transmission mechanism, which eliminates finger skill, is more basic than the power unit, which replaces human energy. But the development of each went hand in hand with the other in capitalist society, because the existence of a crude engine made the need of a transmission mechanism clear and vice versa.

In the mechanical era, handicraftsmanship is replaced as much as possible by machinery, and the craftsman of this era is the mechanic or engineer. This work can be just as interesting as handicraft work, though now a large proportion of the workers are relegated to monotonous machine operating.

This is the method of production analysed, and vividly laid bare by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

4. The Belt System

This is essentially the manufacturing method streamlined by using power to drive a conveyor belt, which carries the object under construction from worker to worker, each of whom merely repeats a few simple actions on each object as it passes him. The Chicago stockyards of the late 19th century, in which a pig was carried along on an overhead conveyor, is a rudimentary example of this method, but it came of age in 1913, when Ford introduced it into motor car production. The belt can easily be speeded up, and to keep the workers passive, thugs have been employed, of which the Pinkerton Agency of Chicago is an

example. Some of Upton Sinclair's novels, for example "The Flivver King", describes this method of wealth production.

The conveyor belt system may be regarded as a special case of the general analysis called Time and Motion Study, which is the science of treating man as a cog in an industrial machine. Such refinements increase man's slavery to machinery, in contrast to the introduction of machinery to eliminate toil.

5. Automatically Controlled Machinery

Once this type of machine has been set up, it will continue to perform certain operations as long as power and raw materials are supplied to it, testing the products, and if necessary readjusting itself, to continue producing products within the desired tolerance. An example of a very rudimentary control system is the thermostat on a home refrigerator, which switches the motor of the cooling mechanism on or off to regulate the temperature as desired.

This method of production is based on an understanding of the science of electricity, just as the power-driven machinery is based on mechanical science. Crude autocontrols can be hydromechanical, but only with the simplicity of electrical devices does it come into its own. We already understand enough of electronics to use thermionic (radio) valves and photocells to make most of the present-day productive processes automatic, though as yet such devices have only been applied to a few industrial processes. But guided missiles are being provided with these electronic controls, and there is no fundamental difference in controlling a homing anti-aircraft rocket and an industrial process.

Still the best non-technical exposition of the science and social implications of automatic controls is *The Human Use of Human Beings*, by Norbert Wiener, a leading research worker in this field, which he terms Cybernetics.

From this classification the following points of interest emerge:

1. The term Mass Production could be applied to all but one (handicraft) of these methods.
2. All five methods are in use in the world to-day.
3. The Belt System is the Manufacturing Method of the Machine Age.
4. Productive processes have been simplified so that each man does merely a few simple manipulations, and then a device is constructed to perform these manipulations more systematically (because it is cheaper), needing man then only for maintenance and adjustment. The first half of this 'cycle' make man a servant to the "Iron Master", while the latter half tends to make him redundant to the productive processes, or in other words, liberates him from the necessity of toil.
5. It is necessary to understand current natural science to discuss such subjects as the relevance of mass production to a socialist society in a useful way, because

increase income only at the cost of losing readers. But a reduction in expenditure has no such drawback. If we save £200 a year on H.O. it is a real economy, not a false one. If, on the other hand, we close the gap at No. 52 by increased dues, it will only be at the expense of other funds.

Only by reducing H.O. expenditure will we gain real benefit from increased dues, some of which can again be earmarked for propaganda. Of course, some say we should raise money by a mortgage or other loan. But this is no solution, since there is still the liability to repay. Even a substantial donation would only ease matters temporarily.

Until we can widen the circle of our contributors, we are faced with the necessity of cutting expenditure where it will do least harm to our propaganda. It is not the shabby offices that are a disgrace to the Party, but the shabby propaganda. We must cut our losses at No. 52.

S.R.P.

USES FOR H.O.

Now that we have had the Clapham premises for two years, it is obvious that we are not getting a quarter out of them that we should. In my opinion we should be using them every night for some activity the whole year round. Naturally attendance at the beginning of such activity would be small. The oak was once an acorn.

In brief, this is what should be done.

1. A lecture every Sunday night the whole year round, with a programme in the S.S. two months ahead.

2. The E.C. to meet one night.

3. A regular evening for Inter Party Discussions.

4. One for discussing current events and problems of the day.

5. One for study classes, especially the study of public speaking and debating.

6. One for social activities and games.

7. On the remaining evening S.W. London Branch meets, and various committee meetings.

8. *This is the most important.* All meetings should start at 7 p.m. weekdays, and 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Croydon Branch members and those coming from Caterham, Coulsdon find that they have to leave in the middle of most discussions to get home, and this applies to many who come long distances. There is nothing to prevent Saturday and Sunday meetings starting at 6 p.m.; then when over if cups of tea, darts or arguments are desired, these won't then interfere with the business of the evening. But to put them first means that a lot of comrades are not going to waste their time by attending half a meeting and having to go because of poor transport.

Naturally I know the objections to all these, and I've got the answers. But unless we do something about it we shall fail to take advantage of the Party's best opportunity of expanding that we have ever had. Let's act now or it will go through our fingers.

H. JARVIS

production then will use the knowledge of nature available to make life a joy, not merely continue to use the methods that were suitable for capitalist society. We must use the past as a guide, not a master, because if life is to be a great adventure, it can hardly be a mere reflection of mankind's sordid past.

Socialism

Amongst other obstacles to describing socialist society, is the fact that we know only the potentialities of our present-day knowledge of nature at best. We are able to describe socialist productive methods as they could be to-morrow, but are largely ignorant of the techniques that may be available even in the near future. Here we break the vicious circle by considering a few aspects of socialism as it could be technically to-morrow. We need a set of reasons why socialism should have certain features, not a romantic description served on a golden platter of elegant literary style, as given so ably by William Morris in *News from Nowhere*.

The potentiality of productive techniques to-day is such that automatically-controlled machines could perform a number of necessary, but tedious or irksome tasks, and much of the apparatus could be drastically simplified. Already in the search for robust circuit components for aircraft, rockets and tanks, etc., a new crystal rectifier has been developed to

replace the complex vacuum thermionic valve for rectification. In fact, new technical devices need be neither ugly or crude—that is only the imprint of capitalist society, which injects a mad rush into present-day research, producing merely cheap apparatus to serve the needs of capital, not humanity. Scientists, like other people, will be much happier producing elegant, aesthetically satisfying devices.

As a specific example consider the question of illumination. The writer submits that electric lighting (supplied by filament bulbs, fluorescent strip-lights or some similar device) driven by a generator (which could be a housetop wind-mill or solar energy absorber, coupled with storage batteries) would be preferable to an oil lamp, and why not mass produce such devices, using automatically-controlled machinery?

In the field of materials, plastics have become notorious as cheap substitutes, and so possibly some people would suggest that socialist society will have no use for them, forgetting that they must be judged on their intrinsic properties and not on their usage in capitalist society. In a socialist society, shoddy goods will not be produced, and tools will not be discarded when they wear out or break, but the material will be reprocessed and so "dirty work", such as mining, will be minimised. In these conditions, the large group of plastics which are readily remoulded on heating—the thermoplastics—are likely to be very useful.

Speed

Although speed does not strictly fall within the scope of this article, the following points should be noted. Certain natural phenomena, such as hurricanes, necessitate prompt, swift actions if people are not to be maimed and lives lost. Possibly in the not so distant future, weather may be controlled by some leisurely automatic process. But at the moment the only experiments on controlling weather—cloud seeding with dry ice and other materials to produce rain—need all the speed of modern devices, such as aircraft, and have (if any) a very modest success. Therefore, the only defence to-day is provided by aircraft reconnaissance, coupled with radio warning services, and the introduction of socialism will not alter that. Similarly, while accidents will be less frequent in a socialist society, medical emergency services will still need prompt, rapid transport. To summarise, in a socialist society speed will be used to save life, not to destroy it.

In conclusion, I must add that I know that many discoveries to-day merely make more toil, but I suggest that is a characteristic of capitalist society, not the intrinsic nature of the discoveries. Once scientists are given the chance to build machines for a happy world, they will not fail; in fact, I submit that only then will craftsmanship escape from the bondage of handicraftsmanship.

ROBERTUS.

INHERITED OR ACQUIRED?

Reply to Comrade Bott

COMRADE P. BOTT (*Forum*, January) puts forward a number of statements about the inheritance of ability which are quite out of keeping with the scientific and objective view of the subject which socialists should hold. He gives a short account of Behaviourism (a doctrine which in its pure form is practically untenable, and which is repudiated by almost all present-day psychologists) not admitting either to agreement or disagreement with it; the ideas of William James, Jung MacDougall, and Spearman are summed up in a short paragraph; and he quotes the performance of six athletes, which can prove nothing whatever. But most important is the statement that "not one single piece of objective evidence exists in support of the genetic theory of the inheritance of special abilities".

This is simply untrue. How, in principle, could we decide whether an ability was inherited or not? We must obviously consider this very seriously, because either there is no possible way of settling the matter to everyone's satisfaction (in which case there is no point in investigating the matter: we can go on hugging our prejudices) or else there does exist a method for deciding the matter.

A Matter of Degree

There is no sense in the question: "Is this particular ability completely inherited, or is it

completely made by the environment?" Any reputable book on the subject will tell you that there is no sense in talking about "either heredity or environment". *All human abilities are formed by both.* Even in processes which are far more automatic than practically any of man's, such as the nest-building of birds, environmental factors (such as the shape of the place where the nest is built) can alter the performance considerably. And equally obviously, even the lowly chameleon, whose appearance is almost exclusively determined by the environment, could not be so determined unless his hereditary constitution enabled him. How much more in man, who is far more complex, must the two sides mingle and interweave?

The question at issue in any particular case, then, reduces itself to: "Is this particular ability more inherited than acquired, and if so, how much more?"—and vice versa. This will not please those victims of the "either-or", who still love their answers to be all black or all white, but it must be recognised before any progress can be made in the practical solution of the problem.

How To Investigate It

Let us take an actual example—preferably a rather frivolous one, so that our emotions will not cloud judgment too much. Let us

ask the question: "Is the ability to stand on one's head for more than a minute mainly inherited, or mainly due to environment?" *The method of settling this point will be the same method as that which we should use in settling any question of this type.*

The first thing we shall do is to find a pair of identical twins who were separated at birth or soon after, and brought up by different people in different parts of the country. We shall then test them for this ability, and also ask questions both of them and of those responsible for them or friendly with them, to find out such things as when they first stood on their heads, whether they once could but now can no longer, owing to age, disease, accidents, etc., collecting all strictly relevant material. We shall then compare the two. We find, say, that both can do it. They both first did it at school at about the same age. We go on, and find another pair of identical twins who have been brought up *apart*, and do the same thing . . . and so on, with as many pairs as we can find. We should recall that identical (one-egg) twins have an identical hereditary makeup. Fraternal (two-egg) twins are no more alike than any brothers or sisters.

We now have a set of observations from which we can already tell something. If, in each pair of twins examined, we find that either both or else neither can do it, we are

well on the road to establishing that it's very largely hereditary: whereas if we find that in half the pairs, both twins perform the same, but in the other half they perform differently, we shall be equally far towards showing that heredity plays only a very small part.

Our next job will be to do the same tests, etc., with the same number of pairs of *fraternal* twins who have been brought up *together*. Here the results will have a complementary meaning. If in every case either both can do it, or both cannot, we shall probably not be far wrong in assuming that environment plays the major role: whereas if in half the cases both perform similarly, and in the other half dissimilarly, it would seem unlikely that environment could play a preponderant part.

But, to make sure, we shall test also *identical* twins who have been brought up *together*, and *fraternal* twins who have been brought up *apart*. By combining the results of the four groups in a suitable statistical formula, we can not only find out whether the ability we are testing is mainly hereditary or mainly environmental in its origin, but also *how much* is due to the one factor and how much to the other. Depending on the formula we adopt, this will be expressed in the form of "odds", a proportion, or percentage.

How Not To Do It

There is no other method which will give such accurate results, though any method which uses a similar principle will get results which have some pretensions to scientific respects.

But Comrade Bott's "method", of taking six athletes with (presumably) different parents, but with an environment in at least one respect (athletic training) similar, can prove precisely nothing—except that similar environments *can*, under favourable conditions, *sometimes* produce similar results, even when the hereditary constitutions are different. It did not need Comrade Bott to tell us that. We have all seen dead-heats. But we have also seen a Zatopek. Apparently, Comrade Bott has not.

Comrade Bott isolated these six, without comparing them with any other

six. This sort of metaphysical isolation of cases which one thinks to be favourable to one's argument is unscientific in the extreme, and does great harm to the claim of Socialism to be a scientific and reasoned case.

The method of science is not to find a lot of favourable instances, or indeed a lot of unfavourable instances, but to use a principle which will give a positive answer, accounting for both favourable and unfavourable instances.

The Principle Involved

What is the principle involved in the twin-method of working? It is this: (1) If two people have a very similar heredity and very different environments, very close similarities are more likely to be due to heredity than to environment, and very marked differences are more likely to be due to environment than to heredity; and (2) Where two people have different heredity and similar environments, similarities will be mainly due to environment, and differences to heredity.

At once, we can see certain difficulties with these two assumptions, and more particularly with the second. The difficulty with the first is that while it's easy enough to find people with a "very similar heredity"—identical twins have exactly similar heredity—it's not so easy to find a "very different" environment. Almost any environment would be dominated by the capitalist system, and would therefore be very largely similar. The ideal thing would be to swap one of a pair of British and one of a pair of Arapesh twins at birth, for example, and note all the difference and similarities that appeared as the four children grew up. But for science to interfere with people in this way would perhaps be unpardonable. Short of this, however, it is difficult to see how the two environments could be so very different. Still, they could be different enough for our purpose if the two children were brought up in different families, went to different schools, had different holiday, climatic conditions, food, accents and relations to town and country.

When we come to assumption (2), there are

two difficulties to face. The first is: How can two people have "different heredity"? It is very difficult for two people to have no genetical similarity. We all know, for example, that two completely different people can both have blue eyes, and therefore at least one gene in common. There are many other characters which are largely determined genetically, and one could never guarantee that two people we selected would not have quite a few of them in common. This objection has even more weight when we reflect that the people actually used in these experiments were fraternal twins, who both had the same parents!

But the objection is not a fatal one. It is not necessary that the two people should be *completely* different. To ask that they should be is to exhibit the black-and-white mentality so characteristic of mechanistic thinkers. All that is necessary is that they should be very much *more* different than the identical twins. And this requirement is amply fulfilled.

The second objection is: How can two people have "similar environments"? But this need not detain us long. The whole effect of capitalism is to make environments more and more similar. And again, it is not necessary that they shall be exactly similar—only very much more similar than those of the separated identical twins.

So that the objections, while performing the very useful function of outlining the limits of accuracy of the possible experiments, only confirm the fundamental truth of the method itself.

To sum up: (1) There is no sense in asking—"Is a specific ability only inherited or entirely learned?" (2) There is a method by which we can find out how much part is played by heredity and how much by environment in any given case. (3) This method involves the use of twins and statistical analysis. (4) Any method which ignores both twins and statistics should be regarded with great suspicion.

J. C. ROWAN.



CAN WE THINK SCIENTIFICALLY?

Socialism is a proposal to apply an idea to a given environment. Its efficacy depends upon the validity of the idea. The test of the soundness of the idea is the accuracy of the analysis of capitalism. An enquiry into the nature of phenomena merits the term scientific when it is pursued irrespective of emotion, prejudice, or fear of its consequences.

When sufficient knowledge is available to analyse a social order, its laws may be formulated. These laws may be checked and verified by repeated reference to similar phenomena at various times and places. If they check they eventually become established, that is, acquire acceptance and validity. Examples: Marx's Law of the Concentration of Capital, Ricardo's Labour Theory of Value.

The postulation of such laws is more than just analysis of the observed and verified facts. It has an aim, which must be a synthesis of the objective facts and the subjective mental process of the thinker. The aim is the solution of the problem.

When such a chain of reasoning is built up, it becomes a hypothesis—which is not a guess or wish, but a "reasonable assumption by which we explain the orderliness of facts." (Scientific Method, A. Wolf.)

"A hypothesis is a proposition suggested by the evidence available to establish the conclusion but insufficient to *demonstrate* the conclusion." (A Modern Elementary Logic by Susan Stebbing, p. 179.) "It has sometimes been held that a hypothetical proposition expresses

doubt. This is a mistake." (Ibid p. 28.)

Having established a certain fact as our major premiss, we then infer certain conclusions from this, according to the laws of sound and correct thinking. A premiss is a statement from which an inference is drawn.

The science of thinking is called logic—and that process of thought which is controlled by its rules, is called logical. By definition, a sound hypothesis must have verifiable fact as its major premiss, or first proposition. Example, "ALL men are fallible." This defines or separates MEN, a category from other entities.

Most of the hypotheses of the founder of the science of logic (Aristotle) started off wrongly with an unsound major premiss. If

we accept the major premiss of religion, the existence of gods, the rest is logical. Religious controversy will continue, therefore, so long as this unestablished premiss is acceptable.

From the general first clause we may proceed to the second or particular minor premiss—"The Pope is a Man", that is one of the class MEN; and lastly draw the conclusion of our reasoning. Therefore, the Pope is fallible. He satisfies both the required conditions. He is a man, *all* of whom are fallible; therefore he is fallible.

The Socialist Party's claim that the road to Socialism is through Parliament is such a valid hypothesis. It follows rigorously from the major premiss that Socialism is democratic; minor premiss, democracy operates through Parliament; conclusion, therefore Socialism is Parliamentary.

A Specialised Art

It is evident that logical thinking is strewn with pitfalls, quite apart from cases where we cannot make hard and fast definitions, for example, in highly abstract conceptions like Truth, Right, Matter, Justice, where formal logic will not work.

Liberal speakers agree with Socialists that Tories merely imitate the Labour Government when elected. Their first premiss only *seems* like that of Socialists—their conclusion is "Vote Liberal". Their syllogism might read: "Tories and Labour are bad", "Liberals are not Tory or Labour", "Therefore Vote Liberal; It is Good". We see, therefore, that thinkers can draw opposing conclusions from the same accepted premisses.

These syllogisms can vary a great deal, both in subject and predicate; they may be positive or negative, whole or partial. The so-called middle-term, MAN, may be entirely or partially distributed. These cases are the subject matter of logic.

From what has already been said, it should be clear that logical thinking is a specialised art which requires some form of application, or training. Babies are not born with logical brains. Logical thought is an artificial construction of Man to help solve his problems. We owe many great scientific achievements to its use by men like Galileo, Darwin, Pasteur and Faraday. Scientists are trained to use it in their own field, e.g., medicine, and other workers use it to maintain and control machinery—but many abandon it in politics or religion.

Trial and Error

No human being is completely and utterly logical; precisely because he is a human being—examples: personal relations, sexual attractions. We are all compounds, paradoxical admixtures of Reason and Emotion, and, desirable though it may be that Socialists should be logical and control emotions by reason based on knowledge, there are times in every Socialist's life when feeling will influence action. This is the value of the Socialist Party to the individual member, which by critical discussion should sort out facts from wishes, and discipline Party actions by reason.

If our proposition that logical thought is a specialised study is correct, it is self-evident that the vast majority do not consciously think logically—they do not know how to. Yet it is equally evident that nearly all human beings think—it is essential to normal life. There are grounds for assuming that some animals have the beginnings of a thought process, though without the tool of thought (speech) they cannot develop it very far.

The fact is that most human beings are rational, not logical. They think by trial and error, or "hit and miss", which is not scientific, but empirical.

Interesting studies have been made of the way in which many long established dicta of empirical thinking have been confirmed by subsequent scientific investigations. Examples: "Rain before seven, fine before eleven"; "Friday wet, Sunday set"; "Practice makes perfect", etc. Some writers go so far as to claim that even pre-historic man, chipping a flint, was employing scientific methods, and that the mere formulation of words like "Bear" or "Tree", because of their abstraction from actual bears or trees, implies the existence of early science. This is one view of Professor Gordon Childe, in "Man Makes Himself", which, despite profound respect for his great erudition, I cannot accept.

I submit that there is a deep difference between the work of the Egyptian rope-stretchers, as the early priest-engineers were called (who discovered a general law that a triangle of sides 3 4 5 invariably produces a right-angle, and used it to set out buildings in theory in the sand beforehand) and the pre-historics who chipped haphazardly until a certain flint came right. The first discoveries, Fire, Pottery, etc., were probably lucky accidents: the last almost made to order, the Atom bomb, Radar, etc.

Thinking Before Logic

What distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is the ability to draw up a written plan beforehand, wrote Marx. I have heard it said that a baby formulates a scientific theory after burning his hands three or four times in a fire. If scientific investigation is the discovery of connections between phenomena previously thought discrete, then obviously babies cannot formulate scientific theories by involuntary response to pain.

Some hold that because we cannot lay down a dead-line when primitive man stopped feeling and started thinking (either that man has always thought and thus science has always existed: or because men thought when they built a hut, or trapped an animal) there can be no such thing as scientific thought-to-day.

While it is true, as T. H. Huxley pointed out, that we all think and act scientifically sometimes, that a chemist using a balance is merely performing the operation of weighing with finer accuracy: it does not follow that every grocer's boy is therefore a scientist when "grocing his greens".

"It is with logic as with other sciences," wrote old Joe Dietzgen. "They draw wisdom from the mysterious source of plain experience.

Agriculture, e.g., aims to teach the farmer how to cultivate the soil, but fields were tilled long before any agricultural college had begun its lectures. In the same way, human beings think without ever having heard of logic. But by practice they improve their innate faculty of thought, they make progress, they gradually learn to make better use of it. Finally, just as the farmer arrives at the science of agriculture, so the thinker arrives at logic, acquires a clear consciousness of his faculty of thought and a professional dexterity in applying it." (Joseph Dietzgen, Second Letter on Logic, Positive Outcome of Philosophy, p. 82.)

A remarkable example culled from many (the history of Science is the story of them) is that given by Sir Leonard Woolley in his broadcasts on the excavations at Ur, entitled "Digging Up The Past". He points out that Carnavon and Carter owed their discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb "not to a stroke of good luck", but to "patient following out of a logical theory". They knew that the Valley of Thebes was the burial ground of the Pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty. All except two kings' graves had been found. Two were therefore still to seek in the valley. They dug for three years and were ultimately successful.

Socialists Must Be Logical

The impressive achievements of logical thought prove its superiority over empirical thinking by actual results. "But," says Susan Stebbing, "unfortunately no one has the power to command us to think logically, even if it were so, we have not always the power to obey such a command. Our thinking is in part determined by our emotional attitudes and our deep-seated prejudices." (Modern Elementary Logic, p. 160.)

"Hence the first task of the scientist is to describe and classify . . . everyone engages in this type of scientific activity; we pass insensibly from common-sense knowledge through organised common-sense to knowledge that can be called 'strictly scientific.'" (Ibid, p. 169.)

In his thinking about Socialism, at least, whatever he may be in other fields, the active member of the Socialist movement can and should be logical.

"If I seek thus rationally to convince myself or others that a certain proposition is true I must be careful to ascertain whether the premisses are true and I must aim at constructing a rigorously valid argument. An argument is valid if the conclusion is drawn in accordance with the logical rules, e.g., of the syllogism or the compound arguments. . . . Formal logical rules cannot afford us a certain guarantee that our arguments are conclusive, but a keen awareness of them, combined with a desire to reason correctly, undoubtedly helps us to detect fallacies." Modern Elementary Logic, p. 159.

People who apply these methods to the modern social problems are scientific socialists, who try to think scientifically about humanity.

HORATIO.